

Contributions

SERMON FLASHES

From sermon on "Preparation for Revival" by Louis S. Bauman.

CLEAN UP

Don't expect God to pour his Holy Spirit out into a dirty church. The vessel must be clean or God will never fill it. Let us clean house then before we invite the stranger in. I once read of a light-house keeper who broke out a pane of glass in the reflector, and to keep out the storm, put a shingle in, in its place. The broad reflection was thus narrowed, and a vessel reckoning its position by the boundary between the light and the darkness, turned its course too soon, struck on the rocks and carried its precious cargo of treasure and human beings to a grave in the deep, deep sea. Brethren, God only knows what vast multitudes are perishing because of broken panes in the light-houses of God, along the sea of Time. Pull out the shingles and put in the glass! Clean up, my brother! Clean up, my sister! Clean up, and let the light of God within you shine out!

FASTING AND PRAYER

I read of a dog once that grieved over its dead master until it would neither eat nor drink, and finally starved. When we once love our neighbors, yea, our own brothers, our own sisters, and our own children, as that dog loved its master—fasting and prayer will sweep this city for God. "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." *Lord God, teach us to pray.*

THE FIRST INDICATION

The first indication that there is going to be a genuine revival in the church is when the church wakes up to the fact that *men are lost*, and realizing what it means to be lost, is thrown into agony of soul. Master, why did you leave the ninety and nine and go out that bitter night upon the cold, dark mountains, seeking, seeking until you found? "Because my sheep was lost!" But why the blood-sweat, the agony, and the heart-break? "Because I know well what it means to be lost!" "My little children, whom I travail in birth," says Paul, "My little children, born out of the agony of my soul, I often could have wished myself accursed to save you." Ah, mother your boy is lost! Do you realize that that means hell? Wife, your husband is lost! Do you realize that that means damnation? Brother, your neighbor is lost! Do you realize that that means everlasting punishment? Then down on your knees and cry day and night that God may save their souls!

THE NEW THEOLOGY

But you don't believe in hell? Yet God said, "The wicked shall be turned into hell." But you don't believe in damnation? Yet, God said, "They shall come forth unto the resurrection of damnation." But you don't believe in everlasting punishment? Yet, God said, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." But these doctrines

are not believed and taught today? True? And multitudes are not crying out before the pulpits of today—"Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?" Why should they, when there remains no longer anything to be saved from? Ah, your new theology is of the devil, and exceedingly dangerous. God's Word is truth.

CONDEMNED BY OUR OWN

Sir, it may be *your* son that will rise up in the judgment of God, and condemn you, saying: "Father, if you had been as anxious that I should know God, as you were that I should know Latin and physics, I wouldn't be here and lost today!" Wife, it may be *your* husband that will arise in that day and condemn you saying: "Wife, if you had been as anxious about my soul as you were about my business I wouldn't be here today, a lost man, *lost forever*!" Mother, it may be *your* daughter that will arise to condemn you in that day, crying: "O Mother! If only you had been as anxious to beautify my soul as you were to beautify my body, I wouldn't be here, lost, *lost, lost*!" I tell you there are more mothers in this city tonight painting the faces and curling the hair of their daughters than there are on their knees, crying to God to save their souls from hell. And the fruit of their wombs shall be their condemnation!

Philadelphia, Pa.

TRACTS, THEIR CONTENTS, STYLE AND USE

Read at the General Conference of 1900, Winona, Indiana, by J. C. Mackey.

When I read the program for this General Conference I was surprised to know that the committee had assigned me such a subject. To date, but one tract is to my credit, or, perhaps I ought to say, discredit, and that paper was not prepared for tract uses. Nor have I in my work either examined, or handled tracts very liberally. This you may regard as a self-imposed criticism. My time has been wholly occupied with the common labors of the ordinary pastor. However, with these statements made, I confess that I have my opinions along the tract line, and shall frankly give them.

The committee, you will notice, have ventured to suggest the outline to be followed, namely, "Contents, Style and Use." Should I prove guilty of concealing this analysis, or treating the subject according to my own order, it must not be looked upon as disrespectful to the good and wise committee.

Tracts are for the common people, and should be common in contents and style. That is to say, they ought to deal with the old themes of the Bible in a direct matter-of-fact way. And, in passing, I believe it may be said truthfully that the majority of people are common; tracts, therefore, ought to be in common use.

If you go to our theological libraries you will find rows on rows of works of criticism, presuming to tell us what the Bible means. Some of them may be good and helpful, but many are unreachable by the average mind;

while others are calculated to beat out the inspiration from the Word of God, and distill a theological fog in which the perplexed seeker for truth may be irredeemably lost. Men want the gospel of the blessed God in a page, to be read by its own clear light, in a few moments, on the street car, in the railroad station, while waiting for a minute or so before being received by the friend on whom we have called, during the brief time snatched from the conflicts and toils of the daily life, or at home in the evening, when we wish something short, and really sweet to interest the children, and teach them the lessons of faith, and hope, and love.

The tract should present a definite something, and take nothing away. It should not savor of criticism in the least degree. It falls short of its object when it endeavors to find weak places in men's faith, or tries to show that the scriptures that we love best are not sacred writings, and their authors not "holy men of God" who were "moved by the Holy Ghost." No such web as this should be woven into the tract. People read the Bible to-day and claim the inalienable right to omit the interpretation if they please. We say we love the Bible authors, and we are not required to give our reasons either. We simply love them.

The man who has been led to Christ after reading "The Devil in Dry Places," by Christmas Evans, or "Satan's Taffy Dishes," by John Duke McFaden, has chosen in his time of highest impulse, as a help of salvation, the very philosophy which authorities pronounce incorrect. Now, if the same subjects had been presented to his mind, pulled to pieces by the critics, they never could have moved him. The favorite and successful tract is the one that discovers the beauties, not the imagined defects in our Biblical literature.

I do not wish to be understood as condemning the training that helps us to distinguish between good and bad literature; but I do submit that we have within our own souls that which interprets the undefinable something which we call inspiration and salvation; and without this great gift of God we could not even grope our way to grace with the aid of catechisms, and anatomical processi.

The student translating Virgil may read this foot-note: "*Suffusa Oculos*," wet as to her shining eyes with tears. Female beauty never appears so engaging, and makes so deep an impression on the reader as when suffused with tears, and manifesting a degree of anxious solicitude. The poet, therefore, introduces Venus in this situation making suit to her father. The speech is of the chastest kind, and cannot fail to charm the reader." So says one author in his Virgil foot-notes. But the student turns over to the ninth book of the Aeneid, and then reads of a certain Sicilian youth, clad in an embroidered cloak of Iberian purple, who is brought out to be shot down by a Tuscan arrow; and lo! he is disappointed, his appre-